

Dear Kathleen Allen:

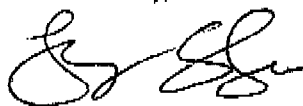
I respectfully request an advisory ethics opinion on the matter further described within this letter. My employer, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), along with researchers from the University of New Orleans (UNO) and Louisiana State University (LSU), applied for and received a research grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to study oyster mortality and growth. A portion of the grant funds are proposed to be passed to UNO and LSU via sub-awards (contracts) to fund each researcher's respective role in the project. A portion of the sub-award to UNO is proposed to cover tuition for a part-time graduate student who will work on the project as part of his master's thesis. Grant funds will flow from the funding source (NFWF) through LDWF to UNO, and a small portion of the UNO grant funds is proposed to cover tuition. I was recently accepted to the graduate program at UNO and am hoping to work on this important project under the direction of my UNO graduate advisor.

I am currently employed full-time as a Biologist in the New Orleans office of the Marine Fisheries Section of the LDWF Office of Fisheries. My job responsibilities include field sampling for commercially-important species (shrimp, crabs, finfish, oysters), data entry, and analysis. My work supports fisheries management and is a critical component of fisheries conservation in Louisiana.

My bosses have expressed to me that advanced educational training of employees benefits the state as it furthers the intellectual aptitude of LDWF. Although it was not anticipated when the research project was proposed that the UNO graduate student who may be involved would be an LDWF employee, I feel that I am an ideal candidate for the project. I receive no direct monetary benefit from the UNO sub-award and only receive tuition coverage for my graduate training. This tuition coverage does not necessarily guarantee a Master's degree. I must still attend and pass my classes as well as defend my final thesis project before a graduate committee. Additionally, a college degree confers no promise of financial gain in and of itself. Considering these facts, I feel strongly that I am receiving no direct financial benefit from my involvement with this project through the sub-award from LDWF to UNO. It is my sincere hope that the Ethics Board agrees and finds no ethical issue with the payment of my graduate school tuition by UNO.

If you have any questions or need additional information, I can be contacted by phone at 504-884-0498 or by email at tsehlinger@wlf.la.gov.

Sincerely,



Troy Sehlinger

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